

even in critical circumstances. All warnings made in advance by research institutes and monitoring organizations were disregarded. Besides alienation mentioned above, there is one more explanation of weakness of power. ‘Organizations that had been rational and efficient under normal dynamics of nature were now having great difficulty coping with its extreme movements. The severe weather exposed modern society as fragile. Previously, nature has seemed reduced to benign recreation, but now it appeared threatening and filled with danger’. (Murphy, 2010: 88-89). Only some kind of businesses celebrated because the prices for all could make cool – ventilators, conditioners, sun-screens and the like – jumping up every day.

As to academics, they divided in two parts. A majority of professors and instructors of high schools (with their children and relatives) simply run away from zones of fire and smog, and calmly continued their relaxation abroad. Only by the command from the top some of them as well as regional and local executives were forced to return to suffering cities and towns. On the contrary, the minority of academics, mainly involved in nature protection, took part in aid and rescue operations at once. They worked not only as consultants or experts, but did any rescue work which was needed in a particular place. As I confirmed empirically, the old tradition of Russian scientists *khozdenie v narod* (going to people) had been revitalized (Yanitsky, 2005). But there is another explanation of their activity: many of them had bought dachas (shale) in devastated rural villages, and therefore they defended from fires not only a common good but their private property.

## 8. On shortcomings of rescue operations

Since we, sociologists, had been insiders and practiced bottom—up view, some deficits and mistakes of official organizations responsible for rescue became clearly seen. Firstly, the impact on political and economic processes underline a disaster had been not investigated (for example, a local administration functions or building materials). Rescue organizers first looking at the aid operation itself. Then, the rescuers has no a rehabilitation program. Their operations were restricted by prevention fire of houses of local inhabitants, only. There were no programs of their further security, food supply, etc. They did not know the state of art of targeted population *before* the beginning of disaster and aid intervention. Neither municipal authorities nor rescuers did not know how many people were actually needed in aid and medi-

cal help, because some of residents left their homes before fire. It may be said that the state bodies have no models and the least idea on the forthcoming disaster, its scope, timing, pace, probable character of damages as well as on how to cope with it.

Furthermore, the authorities has no idea what must be done (secured) first of all and what can wait till Spring (Summer, etc). Then it is a problem of neglecting long-term effect of disaster. Rescues returned to their barracks and who will plan and implement of people, settlement and nature rehabilitation?

I share the view of Keen that not consulting of end-user is a serious problem. The voice of victims only rare comes through the evaluations made by officials. Calling victims or end-users 'beneficiaries' tends to pre-empt the crucial question or whether they have indeed benefited.

The next common failing in evaluations of a disaster consequences is that the sociologists and rescuers, being outsiders, not asking relevant questions to victims of disaster. For example, they were usually never asked about plans on their immediate and more distant future. As our investigation showed the situation is 50: 50. One half has no plan to resettle, the other dreams to leave their settlement for ever.

I agree with Keen that problems of timing is very acute. Insofar as evaluations are carried out at the end of the project (whether this is development or relief), there will be few opportunities for putting right problems as they arise. The temptation is for donors to take minimal responsibility for implementation a complicated set of rehabilitation measures. Donors prefer simply to decide at the end of a rescue operation 'whether the implementing partners performed well or badly. And the final related problem centers on *who is evaluating whom*. Some aid workers have stressed that a proper evaluation should be a "two-way street": there should be opportunities for recipients to evaluate donors as well as the other way round.' (Keen, 2008: 158-9). Donors and rescue organization welcomed to use resources of local people, but never involved them in planning of rescue operations and their evaluations.

## 9. Conclusions

Biophysical 'events undermine assumptions of safety and mastery of nature' (Murphy, 2010: 15). Nature defined the rescue structure of civil rescuers activities and stimulates the emergence of multiple 'spots' of activity far